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## Aruba's Sunset Parade was full of good vibes and unity



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# Trump loyalist Kash Patel is confirmed as FBI director by the Senate despite deep Democratic doubts

By **ERIC TUCKER**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Senate on Thursday narrowly voted to confirm Kash Patel as director of the FBI, moving to place him atop the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency despite doubts from Democrats about his qualifications and concerns he will do Donald Trump's bidding and go after the Republican president's adversaries.

"I cannot imagine a worse choice," Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., told colleagues before the 51-49 vote by the GOP-controlled Senate. Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska were the lone Republican holdouts.

A Trump loyalist who has fiercely criticized the agency, Patel will inherit an FBI gripped by turmoil as the Justice Department over the past month has forced out a group of senior bureau officials and made a highly unusual demand for the names of thousands of agents who participated in investigations related to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Patel has spoken of his de-



**Kash Patel, President Donald Trump's choice to be director of the FBI, appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee for his confirmation hearing, at the Capitol in Washington, Jan. 30, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

sire to implement major changes at the FBI, including a reduced footprint at headquarters in Washington and a renewed emphasis on the bureau's traditional crime-fighting duties rather than the intelligence-gathering and national security work that has come to define its mandate over the past two decades. But he also echoed Trump's

desire for retribution. Patel raised alarm among Democrats for saying before he was nominated that he would "come after" anti-Trump "conspirators" in the federal government and the media.

Republicans angry over what they see as law enforcement bias against conservatives during the Democratic Biden admin-

istration, as well as criminal investigations into Trump, have rallied behind Patel as the right person for the job.

"Mr. Patel wants to make the FBI accountable once again get back the reputation that the FBI has had historically for law enforcement," Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Com-

mittee, said before Patel was confirmed. "He wants to hold the FBI accountable to Congress, to the president and, most importantly, to the people they serve the American taxpayer."

Democrats complained about Patel's lack of management experience compared with previous FBI directors and they highlighted incendiary past statements that they said called his judgment into question.

"I am absolutely sure of this one thing: this vote will haunt anyone who votes for him. They will rue the day they did it," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat.

He added: "To my Republican colleagues, think about what you will tell your constituents" and family "about why you voted for this person who will so completely and utterly disgrace this office and do such grave damage to our nation's justice system."

About a half-dozen Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee gathered outside FBI headquarters earlier Thursday in a last-ditch plea to derail his confirmation. □

## CDC vaccination committee meeting postponed days after RFK Jr. took over at HHS

By **DEVNA BOSE**  
**AP Health Writer**

A panel of experts that advises the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention on vaccine policy will not meet as previously scheduled next week.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

(ACIP) was slated to meet in Atlanta from Feb. 26 to 28 the first gathering since Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was sworn in as Health and Human Services secretary.

HHS director of communications Andrew Nixon confirmed Thursday the meeting was postponed, and the ACIP meetings website also reflected that. Nixon did not respond to a follow-up question about a new meeting date. The group meets three times a year, typically in February, June and October.

Kennedy was critical of ACIP during his confirmation process, and ACIP is on a list of federal advisory committees that are being reviewed, according to

an executive order issued by President Donald Trump on Wednesday.

Kennedy also vowed to investigate the childhood vaccine schedule that prevents measles, polio and other dangerous diseases when speaking to HHS employees at a welcome ceremony this week.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices advises the CDC director on how FDA-approved vaccines should be used; for example, recommending which groups of people should get shots and when. Its decisions are not binding, though agency directors almost always follow them.

ACIP members include several academics, a chief medical officer of a community health center, a state public health higher-up and the owner of a family medicine practice. One committee member, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution, said they were informed of the meeting's postponement from news reports. According to the now-postponed meeting agenda, which was still available online as of Thursday afternoon, topics included a new meningitis vaccine, a vaccine to prevent a mosquito-borne illness called chikungunya, and RSV and influenza vaccines. □



**A sign stands at an entrance to the main campus of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, Friday, Feb. 14, 2025.**

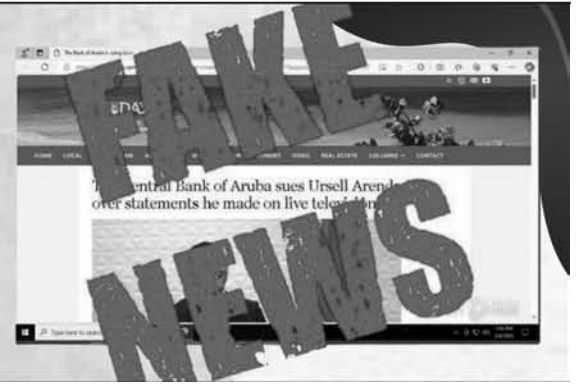
**Associated Press**



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## Trump holds Black History Month event as some agencies skip recognition after anti-DEI order

By MATT BROWN and MICHELLE L. PRICE  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Donald Trump marked Black History Month at the White House on Thursday, preserving a tradition by holding a reception at the same time that his executive order ending the federal government's diversity, equity and inclusion programs has disrupted its observance elsewhere.

The ceremony comes as Trump has called DEI programs "discrimination" and pushed to eradicate diversity programs from the government, directed that DEI workers eventually be laid off and exerted similar pressure on the private sector to shift to an exclusive focus on merit.

The sweeping effort has sown discord and confusion across federal agencies, which have variously interpreted the order to limit how they can acknowledge race in history and culture or report demographic data on race and gender.

Trump was joined by golf legend Tiger Woods as he addressed hundreds of guests in a reception in the East Room.

"Welcome to the White House. And we proudly celebrate Black History Month," Trump said.

The president went on and added: "Today, we pay tribute to the generations of Black legends, champions, warriors and patriots who helped drive our country forward to greatness. And you really are great, great people." Joining Trump were Black political figures and activists who have been his vocal supporters. Invited guests, ac-



President Donald Trump arrives to speak at the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Institute summit in Miami Beach, Fla., Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025.

Associated Press

cording to a White House official, included Republican Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina; Republican Rep. John James of Michigan; Alveda King, a niece of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.; Herschel Walker, the football legend who is Trump's choice as U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas; and prison reform advocate Alice Johnson, whom he pardoned in 2020.

Johnson had spent more than two decades serving life without parole for a nonviolent drug offense before Trump granted her clemency.

On Thursday, Trump called her out by name in his remarks and said he's going to bring her into his administration.

"She's going to be my pardon czar," he said.

It's not clear what the role would entail.

Other invited guests included figures from sports and entertainment, includ-

ing former ESPN host Sage Steele; former NFL player Jack Brewer; and rap stars Kodak Black, Lil Boosie and Rod Wave, according to the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

In the wake of his executive order, the Defense Department issued guidance declaring "identity months dead" and said that working hours would no longer be used to mark cultural awareness months such as Black History Month, Women's History Month and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

That seemed to clash with a National Black History Month proclamation signed the same day by Trump, which called for "public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities."

While the White House has issued its position, agencies of the government have discretion on whether to continue to recognize Black History Month, according to the official.

On Feb. 1, the first day of Black History Month, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced that his department "will no longer participate in celebrations based on immutable traits or any other identity-based observances." And in a diplomatic cable, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the agency's removal of DEI policies would dovetail with "eliminating our focus on political and cultural causes that are divisive at home and deeply unpopular abroad."

The administration has issued a deadline to schools and universities to eliminate diversity initiatives or risk losing federal money. Major corporations have backtracked on DEI policies in

hiring, promotion and workplace culture in recent months, with many citing potential legal challenges from the administration.

Black History Month has been recognized by every U.S. president since 1976, including Trump during his first term.

"Black History is American history. And similar to the story of our nation, it is a story of strength, resilience, and dogged perseverance," said CJ Pearson, a national co-chair of the Republican National Committee's youth advisory council. Pearson, who is Black, has been an outspoken defender of Trump against Black civic leaders, civil rights advocates and Democrats who lambast the president as racist.

"President Trump's anti-DEI policies aren't promoting racism but what they are doing is manifesting the dream of the great Martin Luther King, Jr.: a nation where one isn't judged by the color of their skin but instead by the content of their character," said Pearson, who will attend the White House event.

Other Black Republicans aren't so sanguine about the administration's current course or what it portends for the GOP's nascent inroads with Black voters or other communities of color.

"Trump can build upon the coalition he pulled together in November with Blacks and Asians and Hispanics and young folks," said Raynard Jackson, a Republican strategist. "But if they leave it the way it stands right now, Trump is going to destroy the very coalition he so marvelously brought to the table in November." □



# New arrivals at Guantanamo Bay are Venezuelan immigrants with final deportation orders

By **MORGAN LEE**  
**Associated Press**

**SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)** — U.S. immigration and military authorities say they have transferred exclusively Venezuelan immigrants who are subject to final deportation orders to the U.S. naval station at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where nearly 180 new arrivals are being held in tents and high-security facilities, according to court documents published Thursday.

The court filing by U.S. Justice Department attorneys provides the most thorough official accounting to date about who is being held at the remote military complex and why.

President Donald Trump in January said he wanted to expand immigrant detention facilities at Guantanamo to hold as many as 30,000 people, although current capacity at Guantanamo's low-security migrant operations center is roughly 2,500. The naval base is best known for housing suspects taken in after the Sept. 11, 2001, at-



**In this photo reviewed by U.S. military officials, the Office of Military Commissions building used for Periodic Review Board hearings stands, on April 18, 2019, in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba. Associated Press**

tacks, but it also has been used for holding people caught trying to illegally reach the U.S. by boat and to coordinate the resettlement of immigrants in the U.S. Authorities initiated on Feb. 4 near-daily flights from a U.S. Army base in West Texas to

Guantanamo. Fifty-one of the newly arrived immigrants are being held in low-security tent facilities, while 127 more are confined to a high-security area.

The Departments of Homeland Security and Defense argued in Thursday's court fil-

ing that the detainees do not have a right to legal counsel because they all are subject to final orders of removal to Venezuela, affording them "very limited due process rights."

Relatives of the new Guantanamo detainees and advo-

cacy groups have accused the U.S. government of holding immigrants without access to counsel or any means of vindicating their rights, amid unsubstantiated or disputed accusations of criminal ties. U.S. authorities have not publicly confirmed the individual identities of immigrants recently transported to Guantanamo Bay.

A lawsuit on behalf of three immigrants detained at Guantanamo seeks a court order for authorities to provide unmonitored telephone and in-person access to legal counsel and advance notice before immigrants are transferred to Guantanamo or removed to other countries.

A U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., has ordered authorities to provide phone access to legal counsel, and authorities at Guantanamo said in Thursday's court filing that they have complied, while pushing back against in-person access to legal counsel, as well as the right to communicate with relatives. □

# New York sues vape distributors over Elf Bar and other fruit and candy e-cigarettes

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP**  
**Health Writer**

New York on Thursday sued some of the country's biggest distributors of electronic cigarettes, accusing the companies of violating state laws that prohibit the sale of vaping flavors and designs that appeal to children.

Attorney General Letitia James announced the lawsuit targeting middlemen that distribute fruit- and candy-flavored e-cigarettes like Puff Bar and Elf Bar to hundreds of convenience stores and gas stations across the state. The approach differs from past litigation by New York and other states, which targeted vaping manufacturers, such as Juul Labs.

Widely blamed for sparking the teen vaping trend, Juul has paid more than \$1 billion to settle dozens of state and local lawsuits and in-

vestigations into its early marketing practices, which included launch parties and product giveaways. The company stopped selling flavors like mango and mint in 2019 and is no longer popular with teens. Instead, Chinese-made disposable e-cigarettes like Elf Bar have become the

top choice among high school and middle school students. None of the products are approved by federal health regulators but they continue shipping into the U.S., often mislabeled as batteries, cell phones or other products.

The state's nearly 200-page legal complaint points to

"widespread evidence of illegal conduct, including documents showing illegal shipments of flavored vapes to New York." The filing also includes photos of brightly colored e-cigarettes that resemble soft drinks and candy and come in flavors like "fruity bears freeze," "cotton candy," and "strawberry cereal donut milk."

New York banned all vaping flavors other than tobacco in 2020.

"For too long, these companies have disregarded our laws in order to profit off of our young people, but we will not risk the health and safety of our kids," James said in a statement. The lawsuit seeks hundreds of millions of dollars in damages from the companies, as well as a permanent ban on their sales of flavored vapes in New York.

Companies named in the

lawsuit include Demand Vape of New York, Evo Brands of California, Safa Goods of Florida and Midwest Goods of Illinois.

Calls and messages to the companies were not immediately returned Thursday morning.

According to the lawsuit "Demand Vape maintains close ties with international manufacturers, such that its co-founder routinely travels to China where Demand Vape's products originate to direct flavor development and marketing."

In 2022 litigation, the co-founder of Buffalo-based Demand Vape told a federal judge that his company had sold more than \$132 million worth of Elf Bar e-cigarettes in the past year. The company that makes Elf Bar is based in Shenzhen, China, and sells flavors including "strawberry mango" and "lemon mint." □



**Disposable flavored electronic cigarette devices are displayed for sale at a store in Pinecrest, Fla., Monday, June 26, 2023. Associated Press**



# Russia's Lavrov joins top European diplomats at a G20 meeting in South Africa. Rubio is skipping it

By **MOGOMOTSI MAGOME**  
and **MICHELLE GUMEDE**  
**Associated Press**

**JOHANNESBURG (AP)** — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov attended a meeting Thursday of the Group of 20 nations in South Africa, where top European diplomats were expected to reinforce their support for Ukraine and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio was a high-profile absentee.

Lavrov traveled to Johannesburg for the G20 foreign ministers meeting after landmark bilateral talks this week between the United States and Russia over ending the war in Ukraine. Those talks sidelined Washington's European allies and Ukraine, who weren't involved.

U.S. President Donald Trump further upended the West's position by criticizing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and falsely blaming Ukraine for the full-scale invasion by Russia, which began on Feb. 24, 2022. The war's third anniversary is next week.

Rubio decided not to attend the two-day G20 meeting Thursday and Friday amid tensions with South Africa over some of its policies that the Trump



**Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, centre, arrives at the opening session of the G20 foreign ministers meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025.**

**Associated Press**

administration has characterized as anti-American. The U.S. was represented by Dana Brown, its acting ambassador to South Africa.

The G20 is made up of 19 of the world's major economies, the European Union and the African Union. Those taking part included EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Wang and Lavrov met on the sidelines of the meeting. In comments released

by the Russian Foreign Ministry, Lavrov said Russia's relations with China "have become and remain an increasingly significant factor in stabilizing the international situation and preventing it from sliding into total confrontation."

While South Africa, which holds the G20 presidency this year, hopes that the group's first major meeting of the year will make progress on issues affecting the developing world like debt refinancing and climate

change, initial discussions behind closed doors in Johannesburg were on the global geopolitical situation, according to officials. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot wrote in an op-ed published by several media outlets on Thursday that the starkest divisions in the world were currently between "those who support the law and those who support power by force."

"A country under attack is a country under attack, and

an aggressor country is an aggressor country," Barrot wrote, repeating France's condemnation of Russia over the war in Ukraine.

The United Kingdom, France, Germany and the EU have all pledged continued support for Ukraine, while seeking to be a part of any ceasefire negotiations.

The G20 meeting in South Africa offers European nations a chance to speak with a united voice on the Russia-Ukraine war and any peace process amid their own divisions.

The G20 is supposed to bring developed and developing countries together to create a foundation for global economic stability and foster cooperation. But the grouping often struggles to reach any meaningful consensus on issues because of the disparate interests of the U.S., Europe, Russia and China. In a speech opening the meeting, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said that it was an opportunity for the G20 "to engage in serious dialogue" against a global backdrop of geopolitical tensions and war, climate change, pandemics and energy and food insecurity. □

## Police discover drug-smuggling tunnel linking Morocco and Spanish enclave of Ceuta

**Associated Press**

**MADRID (AP)** — Spanish authorities on Wednesday announced the discovery of a suspected drug smuggling tunnel linking Morocco with the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, in North Africa.

The tunnel, which was found during an operation targeting hashish trafficking, was fitted with basic lighting and measures 12 meters deep (39 feet), police said. It was located during a search at a warehouse in an industrial part of the tiny Spanish territory. Spain's El País newspaper reported that the tunnel stretched for 50 meters in the Spanish section, and that the mouth of the tunnel was found in a former marble factory that closed in 2020. The passageway was hidden by a trapdoor that gave way to a stairway descending into the tunnel, the newspaper reported.

The narrow tunnel "could have been used to transport drugs across the border between Morocco and Spain," the Civil Guard said in a statement. No arrests have been made in connection with the tunnel and no drugs were found at the site.

Police said several people have been detained in recent weeks, including two Civil Guard officers, as part of the broader crackdown on drugs, during which more than 6,000 kilograms (6.6 tons) of hashish stashed in trucks was seized.

Ceuta and Melilla, another small Spanish enclave in North Africa, form Europe's only land border with Africa. Earlier this year, Spain and Morocco opened customs in Ceuta and Melilla to allow the transfer of goods between the two countries at the land border. □



**In this photo provided to the media by the Guardia Civil, a drug smuggling tunnel stretching from Morocco to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in north Africa is seen in Ceuta, Spain, Thursday Feb. 20, 2025.**

**Associated Press**



# Guterres to propose U.N. assumes funding for mission struggling to fight gangs in Haiti

By **DÁNICA COTO**

**Associated Press**

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)**

— U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said he would request that the United Nations assumes funding for the structural and logistical expenses of a multinational force in Haiti that is struggling to fight violent gangs.

Guterres made the announcement late Wednesday in Barbados, where leaders of a 15-member Caribbean trade bloc known as Caricom gathered for a three-day conference to tackle regional issues, including gang violence in Haiti.

"If the Security Council will accept this proposal, we will have the conditions to finally have an effective force to defeat the gangs in Haiti and create the conditions for democracy to thrive," Guterres said.

He added that the salaries for the multinational force would be paid through an already existing trust fund. U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the proposed support would include logistics and non-lethal equipment, adding that he expects a detailed plan to be submitted by the end of February.



**Kenyan police, who are part of a U.N.-backed multinational force, pray on the tarmac after landing at the Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025.**

The U.N.-backed mission is led by a contingent of around 800 Kenyan police joined by soldiers and police from countries including Jamaica, Guatemala and El Salvador who are working alongside Haiti's National Police.

Last year Haiti and the U.S. warned that the mission that began in June lacks personnel and resources and called for a U.N. peacekeeping mission to replace the current one. Under the Biden adminis-

tration, the U.S. contributed some \$600 million to the mission.

It's unclear if funding would continue under President Donald Trump, although U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently said the administration would keep supporting the mission as he urged wealthy nations to contribute more.

No elections held since 2016

As the international community debates options to help Haiti, gangs in recent

months have carried out at least four major massacres, killing hundreds of people. Guterres called the situation in Haiti "appalling."

"Gangs are inflicting intolerable suffering on a desperate and frightened people," he said.

"We must keep working for a political process owned and led by the Haitians that restores democratic institutions through elections."

But Belgium-based International Crisis Group warned in a new report that it could

be dangerous to hold elections prematurely given a surge in gang violence.

Haiti is led by Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé and a nine-member transitional presidential council whose mandate expires on Feb. 7, 2026.

Haiti hasn't held elections in almost a decade, and no president has been elected since the June 2021 assassination of Jovenel Moïse.

The council has previously pledged to hold elections by February 2026, but critics say that's an unrealistic goal since gangs that already control 85% of Haiti's capital are on a renewed rampage to seize more territory.

Council President Leslie Voltaire recently said that he believes Haiti can hold elections on Nov. 15 and runoffs early next year, but in only eight of 10 regions in Haiti that are free of gangs. Corruption, infighting and the specter of electoral violence International Crisis Group said the pace of elections depends on funds allocated by the Haitian government and foreign donors, with only \$45 million available so far out of an estimated \$90 million to \$120 million needed. □

# Lula says Bolsonaro's push for amnesty means he's admitting guilt in Brazil coup plot

By **GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA**

**Associated Press**

**SAO PAULO (AP)** — Brazilian

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said Thursday that his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, is acknowledging his guilt in a case in which he's accused of plotting a coup to stay in power after his 2022 electoral defeat by focusing on a campaign for amnesty.

Bolsonaro and allied lawmakers are pushing for a bill that would pardon those convicted over an insurrection on Jan. 8, 2023 when supporters of the far-right leader stormed government buildings in Brasília, Brazil's capital, emulating

the U.S. Capitol riots. They are also trying to amend a law that prevents convict-

ed criminals from running for office.

"He's asking for amnesty,

which means he's basically saying, 'Guys, I'm guilty. I tried to come up with a plan to kill Lula, I tried to come up with a plan to kill (Vice President Geraldo) Alckmin, I tried to come up with a plan to kill (Justice) Alexandre de Moraes,'" Lula told Radio Tupi during a live interview.

Prosecutor-General Paulo Gonet on Tuesday charged Bolsonaro with devising a multipronged plot to remain in power despite his loss to Lula, including an alleged plan to poison Lula and shoot dead Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, a foe of the former president.

Bolsonaro has denied any wrongdoing and dismissed accusations against him as vague, saying the charges were the result of an authoritarian regime manufacturing internal enemies. He was already banned by Brazil's top electoral court to run in elections until 2030 over abuse of power while in office and casting unfounded doubts on the country's electronic voting system.

The Brazilian president added that Bolsonaro and his allies who were also charged should first defend themselves in court instead of asking for forgiveness in advance. □



**Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro arrives for a luncheon with senators from his support base, at the National Congress building in Brasília, Brazil, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025.**

**Associated Press**



## Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our “Dorado”

(Oranjestad)—If you’re ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can’t recognize. One of these may be the “Dorado”, a common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here’s some information about the beloved Dorado.

Dorado has many different names it can be referred to. Dral, Dorao, Drals, Drado, are some of them in Papiamentu. In English, it is also called Mahi Mahi, Dolphinfish, or Dorado. It’s a good example to reflect on why there can be many names. The same fish becomes known by different common names, why? Common names come only when a group of people, to understand each other, assign a name to a fish. Mahi Mahi, for example, comes from Hawaii and means “very strong”. Dorado is based on Spanish and refers to the golden yellow color that the fish shines with under the sun. Why it’s called Dolphinfish in English is not well defined and while there are several stories around this, none have been confirmed.

Dorado is found in all tropical to subtropical oceans around the world. Dorado is very popular both for recreational fishing and for consumption. It is known among fishermen as an exciting catch and a fish that puts up a good fight. Its meat is very good for consumption and it is also commercially fished for that reason.

They grow very fast, up to 2.7 inches (almost 7 cm) per week. They can live up to a maximum of 5 years although very few reach that age. Most become adults within 1 year but many become reproductive after just 5 or 6 months and reproduce very quickly too.

They live in open water on the surface most of the time. Many fish seek them around sushi lines or floating objects on the sea. Often you will find a group landing together and if you keep a male on the line, often the others will stay close or can keep the group interested by giving shrimp or squid.



### Description:

Dorado has a distinctive body. It has a large tail and its long, flat body ends in a large blunt head. Its color of yellow and green or blue makes it immediately recognizable, even with small variations in these colors.

Dorado has clear differences between adult females and males. The male is larger and can easily

reach 50 to 80 pounds and has a much flatter head compared to the female. Therefore, male Dorados are also called “bull Dorado”.

Dorado can be found in our waters around the island all year round, but there are periods when it is easier to find than others. □

**Source: The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).**

## Papiamentu words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamentu above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamentu you may encounter is “Bon bini.” Bon bini in Papiamentu means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamentu word for tourists.

### Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say “hello” in Papiamentu. At least, not officially. We often just use the English “hello” or “hey”, or Dutch “hallo” to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with “con bay?” or “con ta?” Con bay is a shortened version of “con ta bay?”, which essentially means “how are you?”

The word “con” in Papiamentu



means “how?” and is pronounced with a rounder “o” sounds, like in the English word “cone”. “Ta bay” refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word “ayo” (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use “te oro”, which means “see you later”.

### Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamentu is no different. Since Papiamentu is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phras-

es may look very familiar.

1. Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word “bon” means “good”, and while “dia” does not directly mean “morning” in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.
2. Bon tardi. In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use “bon tardi” to greet people, which means “good afternoon”. “Tardi” actually comes from the word “atardi”, which directly translates to “afternoon”. However, the short-

ened “tardi” is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

3. Bon noch. You guessed it, “bon noch” means “good night”. Just like “tardi”, “noch” is actually the shortened version of the word “anochi”.

### Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamentu. Just like Spanish, our yeses are “si” and our no’s are “no”. Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say “se”, which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

### Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is “danki”, which means literally “thank you”. “Danki” is derived from the Dutch word “bedankt”. Though we don’t really have a translation for “I appreciate it” in English, we do use “masha danki” to convey the message. “Masha” means “a lot” or “very”, so “masha danki” means “thank you very much”. □



## Aruba's Sunset Parade was full of good vibes and unity



The people of Aruba and even our lovely visitors were able to enjoy a beautiful Sunset Parade wednesday night, which was full of good vibes, amazing music and a lot of beauty.

Along with the locals, who always bring their happy-go-lucky personalities and unique vibes to the parades, there were also many tourists waiting for the parade. It was absolutely beautiful to see our locals and visitors socialize, share a piece of Aruba's culture and, like Simon Toppenberg who came all the way from Australia, enjoy our beautiful carnival in harmony.

The parade's route was the same as usual, starting at Chengs, going through

Bubali, then Do It Center and continuing at Boegoeroei, passing Misa Santa Anna, Botica Santa Anna and fishing up at CMB Noord.

Sunset Parade started with Aruba Tourism Authority/Ban Serio together with Grupo di Asambeho, followed by Chichi's Group & Disco. After these two, we saw Touch of Steel Band and Grupo Loco, who were followed by Seroe Janchi Group and the Lastlast with Youth Extreme Band finishing up the parade.

Locals and visitors alike were able to enjoy a continuation of Aruba's beautiful carnival that shows the colorful happiness in our culture that Aruba has to share. □

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**ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.**

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well

as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from Simon Toppenberg all the way from Brisbane, Australia.

He wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is a little slice of paradise. Beautiful palces, beautiful people."

Thank you for sending this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



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## Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

**SAN NICOLAS—** At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

### Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three

amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history. Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or

scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how our Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

### The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art

Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.

### Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Cosecha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □

## Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing a Goodwill Ambassador of Aruba. The honoree was respectively honored with a certificate for her years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

### The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

### The honoree was:

Goodwill Ambassador  
Mrs. Patty Castrogivanni from Port Jefferson New York, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented her with gifts, and thanked her for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination, her home away from home.

### The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honoree was:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beaches.

- Aruba's weather.
- "Total relaxation"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Au-

thority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for her continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □





## Birds of Aruba



**ORANJESTAD —** On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The founda-



dation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundation's Facebook page.

### The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful

things start happening in nature.

### Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.



### Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory.

English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male)  
Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect.

## Best spots to view the sunset

**(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.**

### California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

### Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the

sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!\*

### Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a

spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

### Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this in-

credible scenery.

### Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell...☐





## Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names

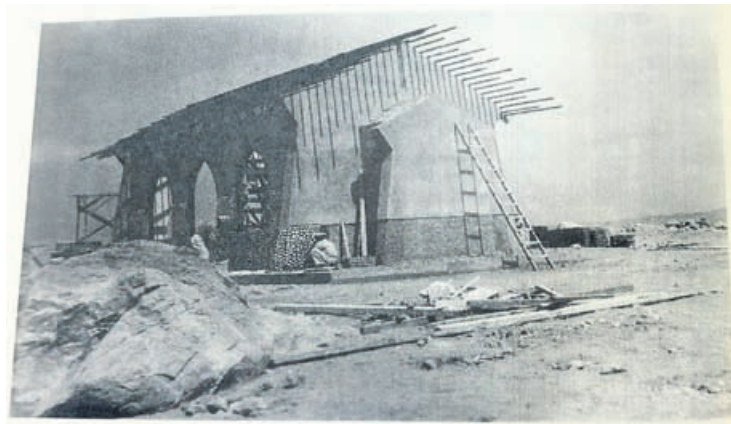
Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

### Ayo

Ajo, or Ayo, is a word with Arawak-Indian origin. A (or Ha) is an Indo-Antillean generalizing word. If you were to change a part of the word "Ayo", namely 'Yo', to 'Yu' and make 'Ayu', it would mean "white."

However, as we now know, the name of the neighborhood is 'Ayo'. The word 'Yo' stands for Yocahu, which is



another word for 'creator' in Arawak/Taino and in the Papiamentu spoken today, 'Ayo' means 'bye'.

At Ayo, you can find some of the most well known rock formations. These formations became a well loved and visited attraction at Aruba that is held in high regards by both tourists and locals alike.

If you'd like to know more about the rock formations at Ayo, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all about its location and history.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; A.

### Alto Vista

This word combination can



be roughly translated to a 'high point of view' and the neighborhood received this name from the Hill.

In the surrounding areas, Domingo Antonia Silvestre built his by his own means the very first chapel or church of Aruba. The walls of this church were made with rocks but the roof was made of dry corn stalks. The

church was inaugurated by father Pablo Algemesi

If you'd like to know more about the Alto Vista Church's beautiful history, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all you need to know about it for when you visit it.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; AV. □

## Meet Aruba's biggest hero Boy Ecury

**(Oranjestad)—This past May 4th, Aruba as well as The Netherlands commemorated those who sadly perished during the Second World War. As is known around the globe, this chapter in world history is one of the most tragic yet, and many soldiers and rebels have died on the front-line during this time.**

One of those rebels who have fought against the Nazi regime, was an Aruban named Segundo Jorge Adelberto "Boy" Ecury. Born in Aruba on April 23rd, 1922, Boy spent his childhood on the island, before being sent to The Netherlands by his father when he was 15 years old to continue his studies abroad. This was in 1937, three years before WWII broke out.

During the war, he actively participated in the rebellion in The Netherlands against the Nazi regime,

but his rebellious streak and constant drive to fight for justice began even before the war broke out. Being a person of color with a Haitian heritage living in The Netherlands made him vulnerable to discrimination, and this inspired him to be an activist, to stand up and fight against discrimination and oppression.

After seeing the horrific bombings of Rotterdam first-hand, he decided to join the resistance. At the same time, he was still studying and living with family in Tilburg. It was there where he met people who printed and distributed the rebellion newspaper. This would be the first of three rebellion groups that he would join throughout his 4-year service to the resistance.

Boy's primary task as member of the group was to distract the German soldiers

while others ran into hiding into alleyways. This he was able to do because of his skin color and confronting demeanor. Boy also participated in the multiple sabotaging operations against the German military occupying The Netherlands. These included bombings on German military trucks and trains. The group also helped people go into hiding, as well as opened fire against allies of the Nazi regime. In these operations, Boy really stood out for his cold bloodedness.

In 1943, he received a notice to be placed for work in Germany. This he refused, of course, and went into hiding using multiple addresses in multiple cities. Because he was a wanted man, he of course could not continue to be active as a rebel. However, stubborn and naturally rebellious as he was, he always tried to join in on the opera-

tions regardless.

In 1944, after his friend Luis de Lannoy, a fellow rebel from Curacao, was arrested and executed, he moved to Delft, where he joined his third and last group in Rotterdam. During this time, he wrote a goodbye letter for his family, possibly knowing the risks of him being active again in the big cities.

Eventually, he proved himself right. On November 5th, 1944, Boy Ecury was arrested by German soldiers. He was placed in the "Oranjestad" prison in Scheveningen, The Hague, where he was questioned. Despite being given away by an acquaintance, he himself never gave away the names of his comrades. Famously, he told his cell mate: "I will die with a smile on my face."

On November 6th, 1944, Ecury was executed. He was only 22 years old.



Ecury was buried with military honor. In 1949, the Aruban Government erected a monumental bust of him in front of what is now the linear park trail, and in 1984 he received the Resistance Memorial Cross postmortem.

Boy's life motto was this: "In my father's house, there is no place for a traitor."

**Source: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.**



# CROSSWORD

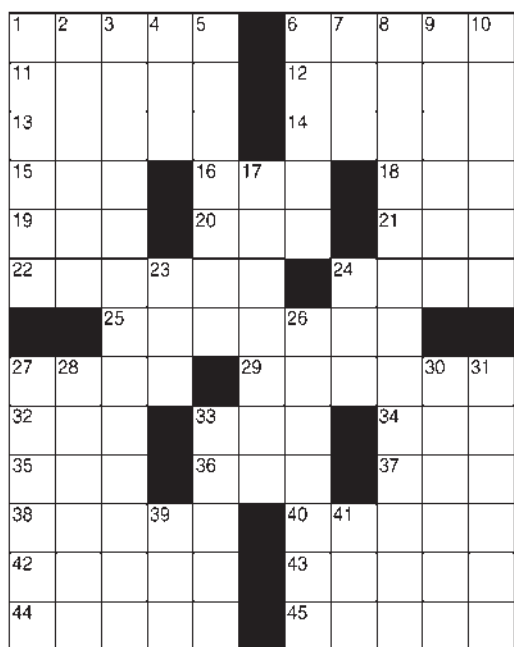
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 42 Skiing spot
  - 1 Supple
  - 6 Aquarium fish
  - 11 Earthy pigment
  - 12 Grill waste
  - 13 Note from the boss
  - 14 Track events
  - 15 Pouchlike part
  - 16 Stunned wonder
  - 18 Links position
  - 19 Swelled head
  - 20 June honoree
  - 21 Tourist stop
  - 22 Email field
  - 24 Sports figure
  - 25 Car racer Enzo

## DOWN

- 1 Red-ink amounts
- 2 Glacial period
- 3 John Grisham book
- 4 Skirt edge
- 5 Device for a book lover
- 6 Domesticated

- 7 Language suffix
- 8 John Grisham book
- 9 Eye part
- 10 Agree-ment
- 17 Arrest paper
- 23 Ruby of films
- 24 — Lanka
- 26 Stockpiled
- 27 Sign up
- 28 Curly-coated dog
- 30 Diner order
- 31 Goes 80
- 33 Some change
- 39 Make a choice
- 41 Letter after sigma



2-23

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-23

## CRYPTOQUOTE

KGX'D KD XKRA DC DQKXH  
DQYD DCTCSSCB KG Y XAB  
UYZ BKDQ XC TKGDYHAG KX  
KD ZAD? — EVRZ TYVU  
TCXDFCTASZ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOONER OR LATER,  
EVER TO BE WORTHY OF HIS  
DESTINY, WE MUST FILL OUR HEARTS WITH  
TOLERANCE. — STAN LEE

# Cruise ship Schedule: February 17 - 23 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	17	RESILIENT LADY	09.00	23.59	C	1
TUE	18	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1
WED	19	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	****	C	1
		CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	21.00	I	1
THU	20	EMERALD PRINCESS - Dept.	****	22.00	C	
SAT	22	OCEANIA SIRENA	11.00	21.00	C	1
SUN	23	EXPLORA II	08.00	21.00	C	1

# Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

## Supermarket hours

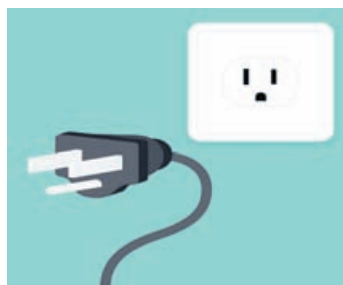


Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

## Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

## Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

## Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7



# Researchers link a gene to the emergence of spoken language



Casts of skulls are seen inside an exhibit of early human species inside the Smithsonian Hall of Human Origins, Thursday, July 20, 2023, at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, in Washington.

Associated Press

By LAURA UNGAR  
AP Science Writer

Why did humans start speaking? Scientists suggest genetics played a big role – and they say the evolution of this singular ability was key to our survival.

A new study links a particular gene to the ancient origins of spoken language, proposing that a protein variant found only in humans may have helped us communicate in a novel way. Speech allowed us to share information, coordinate activities and pass down knowledge, giving us an edge over extinct cousins like Neanderthals and Denisovans.

The new study is “a good first step to start looking at the specific genes” that may affect speech and language development, said Liza Finestack at the University of Minnesota, who was not involved with the research.

What scientists learn may someday even help people with speech problems. The genetic variant researchers were looking at was one of a variety of genes “that contributed to the emergence of Homo sapiens as the dominant species, which we are today” said Dr. Robert Darnell, an author of the study published Tuesday in the

journal Nature Communications.

Darnell has been studying the protein – called NOVA1 and known to be crucial to brain development – since the early 1990s. For the latest research, scientists in his lab at New York’s Rockefeller University used CRISPR gene editing to replace the NOVA1 protein found in mice with the exclusively human type to test the real-life effects of the genetic variant. To their surprise, it changed the way the animals vocalized when they called out to each other. Baby mice with the human

variant squeaked differently than normal littermates when their mom came around. Adult male mice with the variant chirped differently than their normal counterparts when they saw a female in heat. Both are settings where mice are motivated to speak, Darnell said, “and they spoke differently” with the human variant, illustrating its role in speech. This isn’t the first time a gene has been linked to speech. In 2001, British scientists said they had discovered the first gene tied to a language and speech

disorder.

Called FOXP2, it was referred to as the human language gene. But though FOXP2 is involved in human language, it turned out that the variant in modern humans wasn’t unique to us. Later research found it was shared with Neanderthals. The NOVA1 variant in modern humans, on the other hand, is found exclusively in our species, Darnell said.

The presence of a gene variant isn’t the only reason people can speak. The ability also depends on things like anatomical features in the human throat and areas of the brain that work together to allow people to speak and understand language. □

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



## Movie Review: Hit man pic 'Old Guy' has style, but it's no bull's-eye

By **LINDSEY BAHR**  
AP Film Writer

A boomer hit man is given a nightmare final assignment to train his own Gen Z replacement in Simon West's lifeless action-comedy "Old Guy." Christoph Waltz's Danny Dolinski is the one at an unwelcome crossroads in the film. He's only partially healed from a hand injury that's rendered him dependent on pills and unable to aim a gun as well as he used to. Dolinski also seems to be in the throes of a full crisis: We meet him not on the job, or even in flashback to his pre-injury glory, but out clubbing. The next morning, Dolinski emerges in a bathrobe to gaze proudly upon the several much younger women who have spent the night. But a room full of scantily clothed model-types who seem to be there willingly is only a temporary balm for poor Dolinski. While he might still be a viable specimen for the 20-something party girls of London, his game does not hold the same appeal in the workplace. Soon he'll be getting the dreaded "we're going younger" talk from his boss, and she's talking about him, not his love in-



This image released by The Avenue shows Cooper Hoffman, left, and Christoph Waltz in a scene from "Old Guy."

Associated Press

terests. This is a guy who is certain he's got a lot left to give in the assassin game, and not as a mentor to a "hitman prodigy," as Cooper Hoffman's character Wihlborg is described. Is a familiar conceit like the wise veteran and the cocksure newcomer tired or a classic? Well, it's all in the execution. And "Old Guy," stylishly filmed though it may be, is not one of the better attempts, likely hampered by the script from Greg Johnson. Generational clashes should be easy

enough comedic fodder for a screenwriter and two capable actors, but here it lands with a thud. One likes to drink! The other doesn't even like to be around alcohol! The more serious ethical questions about hitman etiquette are similarly inelegant. Take this gem from Wihlborg: "Where I come from one does what one needs to do to survive. That includes killing a kid." Hoffman, so perfect leading "Licorice Pizza," is not served well by this script, which never quite justifies

why he's such a prodigy at such a young age and doesn't give him or Waltz any room to play off one another in a natural way. Waltz also can't seem to choose a lane with Danny, an eccentric hedonist with a soul who doesn't think it's necessary to kill kids on the job. He's also working with his normal accent which is all well and good until the movie very unnecessarily introduces his Irish mother. And because action movies of this variety need a

woman, Lucy Liu, who deserves much, much better than this (they all do, but mostly her), goes along for the ride.

Her character Anata is the glamorous manager of a Soho karaoke bar that might also be a front for a brothel, but that's never really explored. What is deemed important here is that she's Dolinski's longtime confidante, and tags along on their mission to Belfast for...wait for it...a date. It's a very strange little subplot in which Anata does go to this date only to be broken up with. The guy she's been seeing is not connected to the larger plot in any way, except as the narrative push to have her ultimately fall in Dolinski's arms.

West is an action and studio system veteran behind "Con Air," "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" and various Jason Statham vehicles. There's lots of shoot-em-up action and bullets to the head for anyone looking for that, but not much more to hang on to. "Old Guy" feels very of this moment in the fact that it looks good and has a good cast and yet can't seem to deliver something that's either entertaining or meaningful. □

## Really, who were those masked men? New series of books probes backstories of Marvel superheroes

By **HILLEL ITALIE**  
AP National Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — If you love movies or comics, you've likely followed the adventures of Spider-Man, Iron Man and other

superheroes. A new line of books will let you explore the back stories of their creation. On Wednesday, Bloomsbury and Marvel announced a multi-year,

multi-volume licensing agreement for "Marvel Age of Comics." The books will combine history and personal narrative, starting this fall with Stuart Moore's "Doctor Strange," Paul Cor-

nell's "The Mighty Avengers of the 1970s" and Chris Ryall's "Daredevil." The illustrations will feature original work from Marvel's digital archive.

Initiated by Marvel, the new series was inspired in part by Bloomsbury's 33 1/3 books, short and compact works about popular music ranging from the Clash and Judy Garland to Madonna and Kendrick Lamar.

"We've been tremendous fans of Bloomsbury's work on projects like 33 1/3, and we can't wait to see them take a similar approach combining their reverence for the material, academic expertise, and unique insights with some of our greatest publishing mo-

ments for the new 'Marvel Age of Comics' series," Sven Larsen, vice president of licensed publishing at Marvel, said in a statement. Haaris Naqvi, director of publishing at Bloomsbury USA, said he had been a fan of Marvel since childhood and welcomed the comics empire's proposal for a "smart" series on its history.

"I remember me and my brothers reading Marvel issues when they came out in the '80s," he said during a recent interview.

"Working on this series has brought me back to that time.

I would love it if the series had that effect on readers." □



This combination of book covers shows, from left, "The Mighty Avengers vs The 1970s" by Paul Cornell, "Doctor Strange: A Decade of Dark Magic" by Stuart Moore, "Daredevil: Born Again" by Chris Ryall, and "Spider-Man: Miles Morales" by Ytasha L. Womack.

Associated Press



# Justin Verlander turns 42 years old with 262 career wins, and would still like to reach 300

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)

— Three-time American League Cy Young Award winner Justin Verlander turned 42 years old on Thursday, and is still hopeful of reaching 300 wins in his big league career.

The right-hander is at 262 career wins, the most among active pitchers, while preparing for his 20th big league season, his first with the San Francisco Giants after an injury-plagued 2024 in Houston.

Verlander threw batting practice for the first time this spring on Wednesday at the Giants camp in Scottsdale, Arizona. He threw throughout the off-season and feels healthy again after beginning last season on the injured list with shoulder inflammation and then later missing two months because of neck discomfort. In 17 starts for the Astros, he went 5-6 with a 5.48 ERA — a single-season worst that was more than two runs higher than his 3.30 career ERA.

“Look, I don’t want to go out there and make a fool out of myself, you know,” Verlander told USA Today after his BP session Wednesday.



San Francisco Giants pitchers Justin Verlander, center, Joey Lucchesi, right, and Carson Ragsdale watches other pitchers throw at the team’s spring training baseball facility Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

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day. “But being able to pitch 20 years in this game and to be able to do something that makes me happy every day. Hey, as long as I still have that fire to play, and as long as I’m willing to put in the work that is required to go out there and compete, then I don’t see why I wouldn’t want to.”

When Verlander was intro-

duced by the Giants last month after finalizing a \$15 million, one-year contract, he called 2024 a “worst-case scenario.” The nine-time All-Star said he never could get into a groove last season because of the injuries, and then pitched about as bad as he felt he could when he was on the mound.

“Positives were, I was able to learn a lot. You can’t play this game for very long if you don’t learn from injuries,” Verlander said then. Verlander will obviously have to pitch beyond 2025 for the opportunity to reach 300 wins.

Only 24 big league pitchers have won at least 300 games. The last to accom-

plish that was five-time Cy Young winner Randy Johnson, who got his 300th win while pitching for the Giants in 2009. Johnson won 303 games over 22 seasons in the big leagues, and was 8-6 in his only season with San Francisco that ended his career when he was 46. There are only two other active pitchers with more than 200 wins: Max Scherzer at 216, and Clayton Kershaw at 212. Next on the list after them is Gerrit Cole with 153.

After missing all of 2021 following Tommy John surgery, Verlander was 18-4 with a 1.75 ERA in 34 starts for the Astros in 2022 when they were World Series champions. He split 2023 between the New York Mets and Houston, going 13-8 with a 3.22 ERA in 27 starts combined after turning 40 that spring. His first Cy Young came with Detroit in 2011, when he was also the American League MVP after going 24-6 with a 3.40 ERA and 250 strikeouts over 34 starts. His other Cy Young came with Houston after going 21-6 in 2019, the only other time he was a 20-game winner. □

## Victor Wembanyama expected to miss remainder of season after blood clot diagnosis, Spurs announce

By TIM REYNOLDS  
AP Basketball Writer

San Antonio star Victor Wembanyama is not expected to play again this season after a blood clot condition was found in his right shoulder, a massive blow to the league and the second major health-related hit for the Spurs this season.

Wembanyama’s condition deep vein thrombosis was diagnosed this week after he returned from the All-Star Game, the Spurs said Thursday. It is almost always treated with blood-thinning medication, which typically precludes a player from participating in a contact sport such as basketball.

Athletes who are involved with contact sports are typically advised to avoid using such medication because of the heightened chance of bleeding.

Wembanyama’s situation comes about 3 1/2 months after Spurs coach Gregg Popovich had a stroke and was forced to take a leave from the sideline.

The 7-foot-3 Wembanyama was the league’s rookie of the year last season and the frontrunner to be defensive player of the year this season. He has already taken 403 3-pointers and blocked 176 shots this season — no player in NBA history has ever finished a season with those numbers, and Wembanyama

did it this year by the All-Star break. He is averaging 24.3 points, 11 rebounds, 3.8 blocks and 3.7 assists; the only other player to finish a season averaging all that was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1975-76. The Spurs open their post-All-Star schedule later Thursday in Austin, Texas, against the Phoenix Suns. Wembanyama had been listed as doubtful for that game because of illness.

“I’m in shock,” Miami forward Kevin Love said when told of the news shortly after the Spurs announced Wembanyama’s condition. “Absolute shock.” Such cases have affected NBA players before, including now-retired Hall of

Famer Chris Bosh whose career was cut short after he was diagnosed with blood clots. Some athletes

have come back, sometimes better than ever, after dealing with blood clots. □



San Antonio Spurs center Victor Wembanyama (1) looks on during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Washington Wizards, Monday, Feb. 10, 2025, in Washington.

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## Ahead of the 30th season, Major League Soccer teams actively picked up international talent

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**  
**AP Soccer Writer**

While the offseason may not have seen some of the splashy moves of the recent past, Major League Soccer clubs did add some notable new international talent, along with some familiar faces from the past. Atlanta United made arguably the biggest moves, signing both striker Emmanuel Latte Lath for a league record fee and bringing back Miguel Almirón from Newcastle.

Of course, there were also big moves out of MLS, like Cucho Hernandez, who was sent to Spanish club Real Betis for \$16 million after two-plus seasons with the Columbus Crew.

It makes sense that MLS teams were active globally during FIFA's winter transfer window, because it occurs in the MLS offseason when clubs are busy building rosters.

However, some international clubs in the thick of their seasons may be unwilling to part with players which

has helped spur increasing calls to shift the MLS season. The league opens its 30th season on Saturday. Some

significant new players to watch: Emmanuel Latte Lath, Atlanta United

Atlanta landed Latte Lath from English club Middlesbrough for a reported league record fee of \$22 million.

He had 29 goals in 67 appearances over two seasons with the second-division team. He was the top scorer in the second-tier Championship during the 2023-24 season with 16 goals. The 26-year-old Latte Lath will be with Atlanta through 2028 with an option for 2029.

Kévin Denkey, FC Cincinnati spent \$16.2 million to acquire the forward from Cercle Brugge in November.

The 23-year-old Denkey, who is from Togo, was the top scorer in the top Belgian league in the 2023-24 season with 27 goals. He signed a designated player contract with Cincinnati through 2028 with an option for 2029. □



Hirving "Chucky" Lozano poses with his new San Diego FC jersey during an introductory news conference for the new MLS soccer team Thursday, June 13, 2024, in San Diego.

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